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The Sociohistorical Meaning  
of Liberation Theology (Reflections  
about Its Origin and World Context)

In previous works I have dealt with the origin and development of liberation theology from the viewpoint of the history of the church or from a theological perspective.<sup>1</sup> Now, however, I will reflect on the sociohistorical world "context" that gave birth to its emergence. My goal is to prove that this is a "phenomenon" with global significance.

THE "MODERNITIES" AND THE WORLD  
RELIGIONS IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALECTIC

From the emergence of the Christian era up to 1492, neither Europe nor the Latin Roman Empire had ever been considered the "center" of the cultural, political, or economic world. The Latin-Germanic Europe had always been considered a peripheral and subordinate sector of a system with a "center" placed elsewhere. This "center" had first been positioned between Egypt and Mesopotamia (from 3000 B.C.E.) and later in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic region, having also the area between Baghdad and Samarkanda as a hinge to connect with China and the Mediterranean (from 750 to 1350 C.E.).<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Europe had not given any sign of its scientific, philosophical, theological, economic, or even technological superiority over the Chinese, Hindu, or Muslim cultures of the time (the latter covering from the Atlantic Morocco to the Philippines).<sup>3</sup> The fortuitous act of taking the Atlantic Ocean toward the system's "center" then located in India, produced the invasion of America and the

conquest of its indigenous cultures. Annexing large territories<sup>4</sup> to Europe created such a comparative world unbalance that historians, philosophers, theologians, and others granted the Atlantic a status of privilege, producing the interpretative mirage of always locating Europe at the "center" of the First World system.<sup>5</sup> "Scientific" histories of the eighteenth century, particularly those of German romanticism, ideologically incorporated Greece into Western Europe,<sup>6</sup> in a dotting process of recovering the past of the modern "centrality" of Europe.

The invasion of America-wrongly called "discovery"-placed Europe for the first time in history (only now and for the first time in the context of world history) in the "center." The management of this "centrality" constitutes the phenomenon of modernity. By establishing the "centrality" of the Atlantic,<sup>7</sup> Europe-America set Nordic Europe free from having to go through the Mediterranean-and therefore, through Rome-to connect with the Euro-Asiatic system.<sup>8</sup> The two farthest points from the "center" became thus Japan on the East and the Europe of the North and Baltic Sea in the West.<sup>9</sup> The event of the invasion of America allowed Nordic-Germanic Europe<sup>10</sup> to avoid going through the Mediterranean Rome. In other words, in a very short period of time (1492-1517), the major event of the Protestant separation of the Nordic German people of the Roman-Mediterranean Christianity, initiated by Luther at Erfurt, took place. Occurring toward the south of Europe after the emergence of Protestantism, the "Catholic Reformation" was the reaction of Roman-Mediterranean Christianity, thereby initiating the appearance of "Catholicism."

Hispanic modernity (modernity I), centered in Seville, established the First World system by bringing together Europe and Latin America and by producing, through its conquest of Mexico and Peru,<sup>11</sup> the first "modernization" via the inspiration of what later became the expressed Catholicism of the Council of Trent. Modernity I was characteristically mercantilist and monetary (of early capitalism) and was driven by an imperialist project that failed with Charles V in 1557, when he abdicated owing to his financial downfall. In spite of this incident, modernity I brought about the first missionary expansion of Mediterranean Christianity, now modern and anti-Protestant, in the first marginalized and colonial world of Europe.

Dutch modernity (modernity II), centered in Amsterdam (1630-1680),<sup>12</sup> was also mercantilist but religiously Reformed and, properly speaking, bourgeois. It organized its expansion simply by founding two commercial companies (West and East Indies), initiating the "modern" capitalist process with a new scientific, philosophical, and theological paradigm (following Descartes or Spinoza). In the eighteenth century, England and Scotland, with the Calvinist or Presbyterian Edinburgh as center, took the lead of the world system and established the first Protestant missionary expansion in the marginalized and colonial world.

Islam, which since the second century had expanded from the Arab peninsula to the Córdoba's Caliphate and Morocco's kingdoms west of Maghreb,<sup>13</sup> had joined the Turks in taking Constantinople and would later threaten the borders of Vienna. Its expansion continued toward the south of the Sahara from the ninth century to the present. The military and economic crisis of the Muslim world<sup>14</sup> drove it from the "center" of the Euro-Asiatic system to the periphery of the world system dominated by Europe until 1945.

This was the way in which the world religions-Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others-received not only the political and economic impact of Europe's world system organization but also the presence of Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant. That is, Christianity became present for the first time in the "peripheral and colonial" world.<sup>15</sup> The implantation of Christianity in this diverse peripheral and colonial world helps illuminate the specific perspective in which liberation theology emerges. From this point on, liberation theology becomes a "reinterpretative and critical reflection" arising at the end of modernity (in the ancient colonial world of the Hispanic and preindustrial modernity I), within the only southern and peripheral Christianity of the poor. This fact produces, inside of a culturally "dominant" Christianity,<sup>16</sup> the awakening of a "prophetic and political" responsibility, in radical contrast to Islamic "fundamentalisms" that claim direct power from the Right. It also yields a Christianity that transforms from within: the definite "popular imagination" that emerged from the impact of the Catholic modernity I.<sup>17</sup> This is a "critical" Christianity from the perspective of the impoverished masses of the South, which could not develop within the Christianities of the rich North of Europe and the United States. It is also a transmodern and postecumenical re-

flection, for its point of departure (rather than the divided churches-both Protestant and Catholic-of modernity<sup>1</sup> is its reference to the oppressed and excluded masses.

THE CONDITION OF THE SOUTH FROM THE DOWNFALL  
OF "POPULISM" TO THE "REAL SOCIALISM"  
1945-1989

At the end of the so-called Second World War<sup>18</sup> in 1945, the United States defeated Germany and Japan and established its supremacy over the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> It took almost ten years (1945-1954) for the new power to consolidate its sovereignty as a world "center."<sup>20</sup> Once this new stage of reorganization of the center of the world's system was completed, the United States confronted, at the periphery, a perpetually sovereign China, a politically independent Latin America (since the beginning of the nineteenth century), and the new liberated European colonies.<sup>21</sup>

In Latin America, from the economic crisis of 1929 to the coup d'état against Arbenz in Guatemala of 1954 (organized by the CIA),<sup>22</sup> the emerging nationalistic bourgeoisie managed a certain industrial development. This effort led to a belief in the possibility of an economic development based in the nationalistic decisions of a populist state:<sup>3</sup> guided by a charismatic popular leader?<sup>4</sup> This was the promising beginning of the most stable capitalism developed in Latin America.

The "globalization" of the market began with North American "penetration" into Latin America by way of the "doctrine of development" upheld by UNESCO'S Economic Commission for Latin America. This initiative was coupled with financial investments and developing technological dependence for the substitution of imports, thus beginning the expansion of transnational companies. Military support was added to bring down populist governments in the territory?<sup>5</sup> Subsequently the Alliance for Progress opened the so-called Decade of Progress (1954-1964'. The acclaimed "development" never took place. Instead, countries in the area suffered extraordinary extraction of their national wealth, inflationary instability, mobilization of their popular sectors, and increasing impoverishment. In 1954 the present process of "globalization" under the global supremacy of the United States over Latin America was initiated.

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The history of this process encompasses establishing a structure of increasing dependency by stages. There was resistance, both successful and not so successful revolutionary movements against this tendency. Only by taking into account the horizon of this historical context can we understand the origin and development of the theology of liberation.

According to national oligarchies and the intelligence services of

the United States, the only way to stop the situation from worsening and to create stability was to move to another form of state rule: military dictatorships of national security states.<sup>26</sup> The economic paradigm based on "globalization" deepened the dependency already started with the Decade of Development.<sup>27</sup> Recent military dictatorships, from the one in Brazil in 1964, to the one defeated in Haiti in 1994, tried to develop a viable capitalism of increasing dependence.<sup>28</sup> A number of consecutive failures (such as the shortcomings of the "Brazilian Miracle," the Malvinas' war led by the Argentinean military, the North American productivity crisis,<sup>29</sup> and the effects of starting the payment of the interest on the public debt)<sup>30</sup> led to reestablishing civil governments by "democratic" elections.<sup>31</sup> The last stage in the recent development of formal democratic countries in Latin America was characterized by a political stability of the people's elected representative regimes. This stage was also limited by an increasing impoverishment, caused by the not so "orthodox" generalized use (until 1989) of a neoliberal "globalization" economic policy.

Parallel to the military dictatorships, for more than thirty years,<sup>32</sup> there was a revolutionary process aimed at various noncapitalist alternatives, successful only in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Chile. This movement caused great popular hope, drawing the participation of many young people, social organizations, and Christian political parties.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, the coming together of poverty and the increasing oppression of massive believing communities, the emergence of alternative revolutionary movements to capitalism, and the refined analysis by the "Theory of Dependence" of the causes of the economic deterioration after the downfall of populist governments (in a Latin American context, where the church had been structurally restored by the impact of the Second Vatican Council)-all created the LIBERATION THEOLOGY<sup>37</sup>

conditions, specifically in 1968, for the emergence of a theological perspective that, from this time on, came to be known as liberation theology.

#### LIBERATION THEOLOGY AS RUPTURE OF THE RELIGION-DOMINATION IDENTITY IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION-EXCLUSION

After a short or long period of development that took centuries, religions of the world identified themselves with cultures that contributed to their origin. This identity with culture, that is, with the dominant classes, was called Confucianism in China and Brahmanism in India. In Islam, it became the official interpretation and management of the Koran by the power of the Caliphate. And in the history of the Christian Church, it was known as Christendom.<sup>34</sup>

While the coexistence of these regional communities (e.g., from China, India, and even to the world of Islam and Europe) led to inter-

penetrating mutual destruction or domination, the identity between world religion and culture was not significantly challenged, because this latter opposition emerged internally. Contrary to this trend, the expansion of European Christendom<sup>35</sup> from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century produced different significant crises in the world religions of the South. In Latin America, this expansion brought the penetration of a world religion previously nonexistent in the region.<sup>36</sup> But the secularization process led by the European Enlightenment (Aufklärung) of the eighteenth century produced, since the nineteenth century, the most decisive factor in questioning the relationship between political power and religious and cultural identity.

For the most part, traditional world religions played the role of resisting the foreign "modernization" process brought about by conquest. This included resistance against Europe's cultural influence and its secularizing impact. The encroachment of these three elements (conquest, culture, and secularization) prompted the world religions of the South to defend their popular traditions from the impoverishing and dominating conquest, the imposition of a foreign culture, and the atheism or unbelief proper to the Enlightenment. Paradoxically, southern world religions' identification with ancestral political and economic powers led them to strive for a "return to the authenticity of the past," similar to the thrust of "re-

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! mentalist" religions. Therefore, movements of religious revivalism in Africa or Asia frequently had in the past, and continue to have in the present, the ambiguous impulse toward both defending their own identity and simultaneously affirming a premodern past that can hardly move beyond modernity.

While the theology of liberation emerged from the intellectual university and working-class elites beginning in 1968, it was not driven by an ideal of a return to a past identity. Its critical difference from the cultural, political, economic, and religious groups (e.g., inheritors of Christendom) placed it in conflict with them, as well as with the oligarchies and the bourgeoisie. Liberation theology's stance derived from its break with, or critical position regarding, such cultural, economic, political, and religious dominant realms and its commitment to the classes, groups, and popular movements oppressed by the dependent capitalism or excluded from the process of modernizing globalization. The source of this commitment was twofold. First, it originated from a rereading of the Gospels. Second, it arose from a reinterpretation of the life and preaching of the historical Jesus, which allowed Christians in Latin America to discover a new meaning of the social and even revolutionary changes taking place in South America at the end of the sixties.

The commitment for social and even revolutionary change of many young Christians who discovered such responsibility<sup>37</sup> led

them to a "crisis of faith," or even to its very loss. What happened was that a certain traditional "interpretation" proved inadequate for the needs of a political praxis at a time of deep crisis. Thus liberation theology emerged as a way of rethinking or reformulating Christian interpretation<sup>38</sup> to make possible a new vision of events—both social and even revolutionary ones—by which the commitment to the poor and participation in their struggles meant building God's reign as taught by the founder of Christianity.

This was a worldwide historical event. Certain militant groups of a world religion, by being located in the "South,"<sup>39</sup> brought about a rereading of its foundational text,<sup>40</sup> the reestablishment of a direct connection with its founder,<sup>41</sup> and thus an advancing of the struggle of the oppressed and excluded of society.<sup>42</sup> Such struggles were now based in the Gospels<sup>43</sup> and relied on the resources of popular imagination (i.e., its traditions, myths, and rites). This stance sharply contrasted many of the leftist revolutionary movements of the time.

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The latter, given their atheistic foundation, fought against this popular religious experience as the foundation of the people's struggle against repressive systems. Liberation theology hermeneutically reinterpreted the religious assumptions of the historical popular conscience to facilitate the liberation of the poor and the transformation of political, economic, social, and religious institutions. In so doing, this theological perspective remembered and was inspired by ancient and fundamental moments of the Christian faith. Among the most important of these events were the liberation of the slaves from Egypt, the profoundly antiritualistic and justice-oriented proclamation of the prophets for the oppressed, as well as the whole proclamation of the founder of Christianity contained in the Gospels. Along with these principles, liberation theology included new insights brought about by such liberating events as the ones produced by Bartolomé de Las Casas for the well-being of the Native Americans during the sixteenth century, or those contributed by Miguel Hidalgo, founder of Mexico, during the nineteenth century. Liberation theology is a creative and complex synthesis<sup>44</sup> of apparently contradictory tensions. Without falling into traditionalism, it claims to participate in the most ancient prophetic traditions and to learn from the very founder of Christianity. It professes the struggle for greater justice in the life of the numerous human sectors of society excluded from the modernizing globalization process but avoids falling into technological anachronisms or destructive ecological positions. It affirms the ancestral religion of the people with a profound liberating and transformative hermeneutic against tragic historical resignation. It shows the importance of the political realm but rejects the direct use of power by theologians as in the case of Islamic "fundamentalism." It is critical of capitalism, not from the perspective of a feudalistic past or a premodern conservatism, but

from a yearning for the realization of a future alternative of greater justice for the majority sectors of society. Those Who claim this theological perspective are willing to risk a commitment to positions that draw on democratic socialism and, at the same time, learn from its present failures. Its commitment to the world of the poor and the experience of Ecclesial Basic Communities moves those Who hold this theological perspective to learn to live with respect and tolerance and promote democratic participation.

Paradoxically, even if liberation theologians are subjected to persecution both inside and outside the church, their presence has become increasingly widespread inside the Christian community and has a deeper impact in the secular realm. The latter is evidenced by the Mayan rebellion of January 1994 at Chiapas, the Lavalás popular movement led by Father Aristide in Haiti, or the public declarations of Frei Betto on the crisis of land occupation in Brazil!8 These are events attributed to liberation theologians by public opinion and the media. Surely the reference is not merely to the actions of some theologians or to an internal Catholic or Protestant academic and theological reflection of the type of modernity I and II. The reference is rather to a rereading of Christianity that has taken root in the massive and numerous oppressed peoples of the continent, who have been intentionally excluded from the process of globalization. This perspective manifests in the 'popular imagination:' its myths, rites, and the historical remembrance of its liberators, among whom we find people such as Moses, Isaiah, Jesus Christ, Francis of Assisi, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Hidalgo, Rutilio Grande, Romero, Ellacuría, and many others. The most dynamic militant representatives of this theological perspective speak of liberation from a domination that began during the conquest with the invasion of the American continent five hundred years ago, and from which it is difficult to find an immediate resolution. For this reason, in spite of the opinion of many, and given the increasing impoverishment of greater numbers of people excluded from the globalization process of the market's capital, liberation theology will continue to provide a critical function in the future. It will also be practiced in other parts of the Christian world, such as Africa and Asia:9 and by theologians of other world religions.5°

To be sure, liberation theology is a synthesis in which the contradictions of the theologies of the type of modernity I and II are overcome. This theological perspective emerges from a commitment to the poor of the South, that is, those who have been excluded from the present globalization modernizing process.51 Thus this is a critical reflection leading to a transmodern hope, aimed toward an alternative of greater justice for the people at the periphery.

NOTES

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Translated from the Spanish by Jose David Rodriguez.



r. For a bibliography on this topic see the following works written by this  
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author: Enrique Dussel, *Prophetie und Kritik: Entwurf einer Geschichte der Theologie in Lateinamerika* (Freiburg: Exodus, 1989) i "Chronologische Darstellung der Entstehung und Entwicklung der Theologie der Befreiung in Lateinamerika 11959-1989), in *Theologiegeschichte der Dritten Welt* (Gütersloh: Taschenbücher, 1993), 263-362 i short text in "Hinweise zur Entstehung der Befreiungstheologie: 1959-1972:" ed. Raúl Fornet-B., in *Theologien in der Social und Kulturgeschichte Lateinamerikas*, vol. 3 (Eichstätt: Diritto Verlag, 1993), 302-34 i new actualized version in *Teologia de la liberación: Un panorama de su desarrollo* (México: Posterillos Editores, 1995). To explore its historical ecclesial context, see Enrique Dussel, ed., *The Church in Latin America, 1492-1992* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), or the Spanish edition of this work: *Resistencia y esperanza: Una historia del pueblo cristiano en América Latina y el Caribe* (San José: DEI, 1995). These works refer to the sociopolitical, economic, and historical dimensions of the secular and political society and the church in particular, as well as to the specific history of liberation theology.

2. See the works of this author: "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures!," in *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*, vol. 20, ed. John Beverley-José Oviedo (Durham: Duke University Press), 65-76, also in *Von Erfindung Amerikas zur Entdeckung des Anderen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1993), 16-42 i "Europa, Moderne und Eurozentrismus: Semantische Verfehlung des Europa-Begriffs," in *Das Geistige Erbe Europas*, ed. Manfred Buhr, Instituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici 5 (Napoli: Vivarium, 1994), 855-967 i "Sistema-Mundo, do Início ao eclusão," in *Historia da Igreja na América Latina e no Caribe*, ed. E. Hoornert (Petrópolis: Voces, 1995), 39-80 i also "El sistema-mundo como problema filosófico," in a future publication with the title *La ética de la Liberación ante el desafío de Apel*, Taylor y Vattimo.

3. I have given many reasons for this point in the studies mentioned in the last note.

4. Some of these territories were significantly larger than Europe itself. They were inhabited by millions of human beings, wealthy in gold and silver, first subjected to a mercantile system, then an industrial capitalist one, and lastly a system of slavery practiced with a prototypical inhumanity never equaled.

5. This unbalance had as a consequence the impoverishment of the Muslim world.

6. Greece had always been "Eastern" and was first recovered by the Muslim world by Al-Kindi (an Aristotelian philosopher of the ninth century C.E. in what is today Syria), much earlier than the Paris of the thirteenth century.

7. Including the North and Baltic Sea.

8. Nordic Europe followed this route until 1492.

9. As mentioned earlier, India was the farthest point from the "center" before the invasion of America.

10. Heirs of the Vikings and the Ansa of the North Atlantic.

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II. And the slow conquest of all Latin America.

12. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974). For an exploration of modernity I, see vol. I; for modernity II, vol. 2; and for England, vol. 3. From the same author, see *The Politics of the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

13. This expansion had included all Egypt since the ancient kingdoms of Mesopotamia, to the Sultanate of Delhi, following the Muslim merchants to Malacca and Mindanao.

14. Compare, for example, Lepanto twenty-five years after the discovery of the gold and silver mines in Potosi and Zacatecas by Spain.

15. Since the fourteenth century (and this becomes a relevant element for our topic), only Latin America constituted a practically exclusive Catholic Christendom of the type of the imperial modernity I. Since the seventeenth century, the Anglo-Saxon Protestantism of the properly bourgeois modernity II type established its dominance in the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, and facing an increasing Islamic expansion, the missions in Africa became either Protestant or Catholic. In Asia, Christianity developed as a minority phenomenon, with the exception of the Philippines.

16. In contrast to the Christian presence in Africa and Asia.

17. Even Latin American Protestantism needs to take into account this "Catholic popular imagination," from the perspective of indigenous Indian religions, transformed in the colonial period. For this reason, Michael Novak argues that liberation theology is the product of a conservative preindustrial mentality, critical of capitalism. The understanding of "popular imagination" springs from a respect of the people's religiosity viewed from a progressive conscience, opened to technological, economic, politically democratic, autonomously cultural, and participative developing processes, as alternatives toward a better future for the greater majorities.

18. This was not a world war but a war for the hegemony of the center of world capitalism. This was one of the most violent, irrational, and numerically catastrophic conflicts ever experienced since the origins of humankind. This war was brought about by the "civilized" Europe.

19. The United Kingdom had been the center of world capitalism for the last two centuries.

20. As a means to establish its dominance as a world power, the United States used the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Germany and Europe against the Soviet Union of Stalin and its support of Japan against Mao's China.

21. These European colonies were liberated by the presence of the United States in Europe. The former European colonialism was modified by the "globalization" of the market and the capital in Asia and Africa since 1945. The post-war liberation in Asia and Africa was the transition from the European colonial domination to the new supremacy of the world market by the United States. This process of Americanization was the first step of today's "globalization."

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22. This same type of pressure was practiced against Nasser in Egypt, the Nationalist Party in Iran, Sukarno in Indonesia, and so on.

23. This populist state pretended to be the product of a common agreement between the bourgeoisie, the working class, and the peasants to jointly rule the

nation.

24. In Brazil, this took the form of Vargismo, in Mexico of Cardenismo, and in Argentina of Peronismo.

25. This took place in Guatemala in 1954 with Castillo Armas, in Argentina in 1955 with Videla, in Colombia in 1957 with Rojas Pinilla, and in the same year in Venezuela with Pérez Jiménez. However, in Cuba in 1959 there was an unprecedented turn of events with Fidel Castro.

26. The "Sorbonne Group" of Brazil's Military School under the leadership of Golbery do Couto e Silva formulated the first paradigm.

27. It needs to be indicated that the paradigm would deepen without cracks, from the military governments of 1983 to the formal democracies of the present.

28. The popular repression produced by these military dictatorships, in both the political and ecclesial realms, had devastating effects.

29. This crisis hindered the support of the United States for its military allies in the continent.

30. This debt was acquired most irresponsibly by the private sector.

31. An example of this trend was the election of Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina (1983) or Tancredo Neves in Brazil (1985!).

32. This revolutionary process was initiated by the Cuban revolution in 1959 leading up to the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990. The latter was influenced by the ten-year war organized by the United States and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

33. This is the hope that presently drives the Mayan rebellion in Chiapas.

34. The notion of Christendom refers to the development of Christianity into a culture or empire since Constantine or Teodosio in the fourth century C.E.

35. There were many Christendoms-Iberian Catholic, Dutch Calvinist, British Anglican, Danish Lutheran -with their respective national church, crown, confessions, and so forth.

36. Africa had a Coptic Christian presence in Ethiopia and Asia, and a St. Thomas Christian community in Kerala, before the installation of this world system in the fifteenth century. A sixteenth-century tradition in Latin America claimed that the preaching of the gospel by Thomas the Apostle from India (identified as Quetzalcoatl and the virgin of Guadalupe dated from as early as the first century. Surely this was the effort of American-born Spaniards with liberation spirit who wanted to claim parity with Spain in terms of antiquity, even to the point of being unappreciative for her gift of Christianity.

37. This happened as a natural development of the "spirit" of the Catholic

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Youth Workers' participation in deeply secularized and even militant atheist Marxist groups.

38. That is the whole matter of faith and politics."

39. This is where modernity or capitalism shows in the misery of the numerous human sectors of society excluded from the globalization process its most profound contradiction.

40. That is the gospel of the Bible.

41. Jesus came to evangelize the poor," and to judge with the following cri-

teria: "I was hungry and was given food to eat." The poor of his context were in a colony ruled by the Roman Empire. Jesus was crucified by the religious and political powers of his time.

42. The event took place between 1968 and 1972 under the guidance of CELAMJ the highest ecclesial institution in Latin America.

43. Formerly the opinion was that these struggles contradicted the gospel.

44. Liberation theology is a highly elaborated and novel perspective, which is ALSO part of the most authentic traditional horizonJ i.e.J retrieves and transforms the Christian tradition.

45. Starting in 1972J this persecution was inflicted in Latin America by the Vatican, which restored its pre-Vatican II Council bureaucratic structures.

46. Military national security or conservative governments persecuted liberation theologians.

47. This takes place as studentsJ militantsJ priestsJ members of various ordersJ and others increase their reference to this theological perspective in their writingsJ conferences, meetingsJ coursesJ booksJ articlesJ interpretationsJ and soon.

48. In this caseJ President Cardoso called on Christians committed to the "Movement of the Landless" to arrive at a solution to the crisis.

49. See my article "Existe-t-il une Théologie de la Libération en Afrique et en Asie;" Recherches de Science Religieuse 2 (April-June 1986): 165-78.

50. Therefore it will not be strange to find works of liberation theologians among the Muslims of Iran or BombayJ in,ndia's Hindu beyond Gandhi 's movementJ or among the Buddhist of Sri Lank~ or Thailand.

51. This is the territory where two-thirds of the entire population of the world is located.

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